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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000212

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: GOK RENEWS REQUEST FOR LOGISTICS SUPPORT FOR ITS  
AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

REF: A. 08 KUWAIT 1113  
[1](#)B. 08 KUWAIT 1054  
[1](#)C. 08 KUWAIT 1141  
[1](#)D. KUWAIT 177

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and  
d

[1](#)1. (U) There is an action request in para 6.

[1](#)2. (C) Refs A and B reported the GOK's request to the USG in October and November 2008 for limited time-frame logistics and security support to assist Kuwait's then newly confirmed Ambassador to Iraq, Ali Al-Mou'min, to travel from Kuwait to Baghdad and between the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) and the International Zone (IZ) in relative security via Milair. In view of the strong USG interest in supporting the resumption of normal bilateral ties between Kuwait and Iraq, Embassy in ref C strongly urged the Department/DOD to conclude an agreement permitting USG Milair support for Ambassador Al-Mou'min's travel through the end of December [1](#)2008. After due consideration, the Department/DOD agreed to this request and assistance was provided to Ambassador Al-Mou'min on a cost reimbursable basis during the requested period.

[1](#)3. (C) The GOK has repeatedly expressed its gratitude to the USG and to Embassies Baghdad and Kuwait for this assistance, which it notes has been invaluable in helping the GOK to re-establish its diplomatic presence in Baghdad at a time when the bilateral relationship is beginning to move forward. The GOK was also deeply appreciative of assistance by Embassy Kuwait and Embassy Baghdad in facilitating the historic February 26 visit to Baghdad of Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Al Sabah (ref D).

[1](#)4. (C) Having found USG Milair support to be both efficient and secure (Ambassador Al-Mou'min has repeatedly expressed concerns about his personal security and that of his staff), MFA Protocol Director Amb. Dhari Al-Ajran on March 5 verbally conveyed to the DCM a formal GOK request for a renewal of the GOK/USG agreement to provide Ambassador Al-Mou'min and his staff with Milair support between Kuwait and Baghdad and between BIAP and the IZ for an additional six month period. He projected that this would amount to approximately one round trip per month. In making the demarche, the Protocol Director noted that Ambassador Al-Mou'min's travel in safety and with "suitable and fitting logistical support" is a high priority issue for the GOK. Looking ahead, Al-Ajran acknowledged that the situation on the ground in Iraq is changing in a positive direction, and said the GOK anticipates that in another six months no further USG support will be needed. MFA anticipates that, by that time, Kuwait Airways and/or Iraq Airlines and other regional airlines may be making regular flights between the capitals. While the

GOK acknowledges that charter flights between Kuwait and Baghdad are already available (and have been utilized already by Ambassador Al-Mou'min with no ill effects), the charter option is not considered adequate on either security or logistics grounds, particularly in view of the fact that Ambassador Al-Mou'min normally travels with an extensive team of security and staff. MFA officials noted that they are prepared to reimburse the USG for renewed Milair travel, and that "expense is not an issue."

15. (C) Embassy is aware that USG support for travel by Ambassador Al-Mou'min or other GOK officials places a serious burden on Embassy Baghdad as well as additional bureaucratic requirements on Washington (e.g. the DOD - State MOU required for such arrangements). We have made extensive efforts to wean the GOK from the expectation that the USG can support Ambassador Al-Mou'min's travel indefinitely, and the GOK has assured us that it understands this USG position. Nevertheless, the GOK remains convinced that Ambassador Al-Mou'min's safety and the smooth re-establishment of its Embassy in Baghdad are important priorities and that the requested USG support is consistent with the U.S. interest in factoring a strong and productive relationship between Kuwait and the new democratic Iraq. Moreover, some GOK officials have alluded to the extensive support provided our U.S. military mission here and questioned why this facilitation cannot be configured within existing arrangements. (We have explained the constraints and distinctions between supporting a senior diplomatic representative of a foreign government and a director of the Humanitarian Operations Center, from Ambassador on down, but the explanation does not resonate.) Without wanting to pre-judge the Department's response to the

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GOK's request -- even as we acknowledge this request is largely born of convenience rather than necessity -- we note that we are now in a stage when Kuwait/Iraq relations are making positive strides and it could be argued that there is benefit to be had vis-a-vis regional integration in supporting this request for an additional six months.

16. (C) Embassy requests the Department's views on this most recent GOK request, as well as Embassy Baghdad's guidance on how other diplomatic missions, e.g. the Emiratis and Jordanians are transiting from Baghdad into the Green Zone.

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JONES